

VII. *An Account of some Observations made by a young Gentleman, who was born blind, or lost his Sight so early, that he had no Remembrance of ever having seen, and was couch'd between 13 and 14 Years of Age. By Mr. Will. Cheffelden, F. R. S. Surgeon to Her Majesty, and to St. Thomas's Hospital.*

THO' we say of the Gentleman that he was blind, as we do of all People who have Ripe Cataracts, yet they are never so blind from that Cause, but that they can discern Day from Night ; and for the most Part in a strong Light, distinguish Black, White, and Scarlet ; but they cannot perceive the Shape of any thing ; for the Light by which these Perceptions are made, being let in obliquely thro' the aqueous Humour, or the anterior Surface of the ChrySTALLINE (by which the Rays cannot be brought into a *Focus* upon the *Retina*) they can discern in no other Manner, than a sound Eye can thro' a Glas of broken Jelly, where a great Variety of Surfaces so differently refract the Light, that the several distinct Pencils of Rays cannot be collected by the Eye into their proper *Foci* ; wherefore the Shape of an Object in such a Case, cannot be at all discern'd, tho' the Colour may : And thus it was with this young Gentleman, who though he knew these Colours asunder in a good Light ; yet when he saw them

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after he was couch'd, the faint Ideas he had of them before, were not sufficient for him to know them by afterwards ; and therefore he did not think them the same, which he had before known by those Names. Now Scarlet he thought the most beautiful of all Colours, and of others the most gay were the most pleasing, whereas the first Time he saw Black, it gave him great Uneasiness, yet after a little Time he was reconcil'd to it ; but some Months after, seeing by Accident a Negroe Woman, he was struck with great Horror at the Sight.

When he first saw, he was so far from making any Judgment about Distances, that he thought all Objects whatever touch'd his Eyes, (as he express'd it) as what he felt, did his Skin ; and thought no Objects so agreeable as those which were smooth and regular, tho' he could form no Judgment of their Shape, or guess what it was in any Object that was pleasing to him : He knew not the Shape of any Thing, nor any one Thing from another, however different in Shape, or Magnitude ; but upon being told what Things were, whose Form he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe, that he might know them again ; but having too many Objects to learn at once, he forgot many of them ; and (as he said) at first he learn'd to know, and again forgot a thousand Things in a Day. One Particular only (tho' it may appear trifling) I will relate ; Having often forgot which was the Cat, and which the Dog, he was assur'd to ask ; but catching the Cat (which he knew by feeling) he was observ'd to look at her stedfastly, and then setting her down, said, So Puffs ! I shall know you another Time. He was very much surpriz'd, that those Things which he had lik'd
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best, did not appear most agreeable to his Eyes, expecting those Persons would appear most beautiful that he lov'd most, and such Things to be most agreeable to his Sight that were so to his Taste. We thought he soon knew what Pictures represented, which were shew'd to him, but we found afterwards we were mistaken; for about two Months after he was couch'd, he discovered at once, they represented solid Bodies; when to that Time he consider'd them only as Party-colour'd Planes, or Surfaces diversified with Variety of Paint; but even then he was no less surpriz'd, expecting the Pictures would feel like the Things they represented, and was amaz'd when he found those Parts, which by their Light and Shadow appear'd now round and uneven, felt only flat like the rest; and ask'd which was the lying Sense, Feeling, or Seeing?

Being shewn his Father's Picture in a Locket at his Mother's Watch, and told what it was, he acknowledged a Likeness, but was vastly surpriz'd; asking, how it could be, that a large Face could be express'd in so little Room, saying, It should have seem'd as impossible to him, as to put a Bushel of any thing into a Pint.

At first, he could bear but very little Sight, and the Things he saw, he thought extreamly large; but upon seeing Things larger, those first seen he conceiv'd less, never being able to imagine any Lines beyond the Bounds he saw; the Room he was in he said, he knew to be but Part of the House, yet he could not conceive that the whole House could look bigger. Before he was couch'd, he expected little Advantage from Seeing, worth undergoing an Operation for, except reading and writing; for he said, He thought he could have no more Pleasure

sure in walking abroad than he had in the Garden, which he could do safely and readily. And even Blindness he observ'd, had this Advantage, that he could go any where in the Dark much better than those who can see; and after he had seen, he did not soon lose this Quality, nor desire a Light to go about the House in the Night. He said, every new Object was a new Delight, and the Pleasure was so great, that he wanted Ways to express it; but his Gratitude to his Operator he could not conceal, never seeing him for some Time without Tears of Joy in his Eyes, and other Marks of Affection : And if he did not happen to come at any Time when he was expected, he would be so griev'd, that he could not forbear crying at his Disappointment. A Year after first Seeing, being carried upon *Epsom Downs*, and observing a large Prospect, he was exceedingly delighted with it, and call'd it a new Kind of Seeing. And now being lately couch'd of his other Eye, he says, that Objects at first appear'd large to this Eye, but not so large as they did at first to the other; and looking upon the same Object with both Eyes, he thought it look'd about twice as large as with the first couch'd Eye only, but not Double, that we can any Ways discover.